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(71) Applicant: WALKER ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED PARTNERSHIP (US/US); Four High Ridge Park, Stamford, CT 06905-1325 (US).			
(72) Inventors: WALKER, Jay, S.; 124 Spectacle Lane, Ridgefield, CT 06877 (US). JORASCH, James, A.; Apartment 5G, 25 Forest Street, Stamford, CT 06901 (US). SPARICO, Thomas, M.; 115 Lockwood Road, Riverside, CT 06878 (US). FINK, Jesse, M.; 51 Graenest Ridge Road, Wilton, CT 06897 (US).		Published With international search report.	
(74) Agents: LECH, Robert, R. et al.; Walker Digital Corporation, Intellectual Property Dept., Five High Ridge Park, Stamford, CT 06905-1326 (US).			
(54) Title: SLOT DRIVEN VIDEO STORY			
<pre>graph TD     12[Slot Network Server 12] &lt;--&gt; 30([Slot Network Interface 30])     30 --&gt; 14[Slot Machine 14]     30 --&gt; 16[Slot Machine 16]     30 --&gt; 18[Slot Machine 18]     14 -- "PLAYER ID NUMBER OUTCOME DATA" --&gt; 30     16 -- "PLAYER ID NUMBER OUTCOME DATA" --&gt; 30     18 -- "PLAYER ID NUMBER OUTCOME DATA" --&gt; 30     30 -- "VIDEO CLIP" --&gt; 16</pre>			
(57) Abstract			
A gaming system (10) includes a network server (12) connected to a plurality of gaming devices (14, 16, 18) that are adapted to provide a video payout on each play based on a set of payout parameters.			

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## SLOT DRIVEN VIDEO STORY

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5        This invention relates to a gaming system which provides a payout for each play and, more particularly, to a system which selectively provides a video presentation to a user, as a form of non-monetary compensation, in accordance with criteria such as player identification data  
10 and a gaming result.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Slot machines provide an important source of revenue  
15 for the gaming industry. For that reason, gaming establishments constantly search for new gaming strategies and features to provide additional incentives for slot machine players to continue play. Some gaming devices now provide video or graphical information to entertain a  
20 player during play. For instance, some slot machines provide "Dotmation", a computer controlled LED display, that ties a game to an animated character. Such a system is currently utilized in "Piggy Bankin", wherein a pig dances around an LED display screen as the slot machine  
25 play ensues.

Another approach is found in U.S. Patent 5,259,613, entitled "Casino and Entertainment System" wherein gaming

devices are furnished with audio/video communication equipment that is connected to a central control station. The control station selectively engages in both voice and video communication with the players at each individual slot machine. Live sporting events and even daytime soap opera television can be displayed.

It is also known that some gaming devices provide an increased probability of winning to attract players. For example, U.S. Patent 5,423,539 (Nagao) entitled "Slot Machine with Payout Modifying Symbols" describes a gaming device in which a player wins by obtaining a certain combination of characters associated with a winning table (e.g., the various winning combinations). The gaming system includes a wild card which may substituted for any character and, thus, increases the probability of a player receiving a winning combination of characters.

Gaming devices have also been known to provide complimentary points for players who are members of slot clubs. These slot clubs provide the player with a slot tracking card which when inserted into the slot machine rewards the player with comp points for each handle pull or game play. These points, which may be redeemed for some prize or gift, are part of casino programs used to attract players. Complimentary points are automatically provided to a player simply for initiating a gaming play, (e.g., paying a monetary sum to begin a play), but do not form

part of the prize structure of the underlying game. In other words, complimentary points are provided to a player regardless of the gaming result. In most cases, the monetary sum paid by the player into the slot machine  
5 determines the amount of complimentary points to be provided by the casino.

There is a continuing desire on the part of gaming establishments to enhance the playing and winning  
10 experience at slot machines with video or graphic information.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

15 Accordingly, it is an object of the invention to provide a gaming device which contains a payout table which results in a player receiving a "payout" for every possible gaming result.

20 A further object of the invention is to provide a system for provision of a video presentation to slot machine players, wherein the video presentation is output as a form of a low-level non-monetary winning.

25 A further object of the invention to provide a gaming system, wherein a player can terminate a video presentation at a gaming device and can resume display of the video

presentation from the point of termination, at another time or gaming device.

A further object of the invention is to provide a gaming device for provision of a video presentation wherein the video presentation can be used as part of a skill-game puzzle, with a prize structure separate from the gaming device.

10 A further object of this invention to provide a gaming system which provides a payout, either as a monetary award or as a displayed video presentation, on each play, based on a set of payout conditions.

15 A gaming system includes a network server connected to a plurality of gaming devices that are adapted to provide a video payout on each play based on a set of payout parameters. Memory at each gaming device stores payout parameters that correspond to each possible gaming result or outcome. When a play is initiated by a player, a gaming result is generated at a gaming device. The gaming device responds by accessing a corresponding payout parameter from the memory which may be a monetary amount, a video presentation segment or a combination thereof. If the payout is video, the network server receives the payout parameter and transmits a video presentation segment to the gaming device accordingly. The gaming device then provides a video payout, in the form of a displayed video

presentation, to the player. The player thus receives at least one form of payment on each play.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

5

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a network with a network server that cooperates with a plurality of slot machines to provide video payouts to players for each slot machine play.

10

Fig. 2 is a block diagram of a slot machine with video capability.

Fig. 3 is a block diagram of the slot network server.

15

Fig. 4 is a schematic diagram of a player database maintained in the network server.

Fig. 5 is a schematic diagram of a session database maintained in the network server.

Fig. 6 is a schematic diagram of a video database maintained in the network server.

Fig. 7 is a schematic diagram of a payout table database maintained in the slot machine.

Fig. 8 illustrates a logic flow diagram of the initiation of a slot machine play.

Figs. 9 through 11 illustrate a logic flow diagram of the operation of a slot machine play.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Before proceeding with a detailed description of a preferred embodiment of the present invention, it is well to define certain terms as used herein. Although the embodiments discussed herein are directed to slot machines, it is to be understood that the present invention is equally applicable to other gaming devices, such as video poker machines, video blackjack machines, video roulette machines, video keno machines, video bingo machines, and the like.

The term "video presentation" or "video information" when use to describe a payout refers to a movie, music video, soap opera, sporting event, or other video entertainment material. This video information is presented via a video display.

The term "resume code" will be used hereafter to refer to data, provided to a player upon a termination of a video presentation, which allows the player to resume display of the video presentation at another time or gaming device.



That is to say, in certain cases, a player may desire to terminate display of the video presentation before the entire video presentation has been viewed. In such a case, the resume code allows a player to continue display of the video presentation, from the point of termination, at another time or gaming device. The resume code may take the form of any combination of characters (e.g., ABCD1, \$\*j1, etc.).

10 Figure 1 is a block diagram of a gaming system 10 in accordance with the present invention. Gaming system 10 includes a network server 12 which is connected to a plurality of slot machines 14, 16, 18 via a slot network interface 30. Each slot machine 14, 16, 18 is adapted to  
15 receive player data, (e.g., a Player ID Number), and to generate a gaming result and a corresponding payout parameter for each play. The player data and payout parameters from each slot machine 14, 16, 18 are respectively transmitted to network server 12, via network  
20 interface 30.

Network server 12 receives the player data and payout parameters and selects a video presentation for each respective slot machine based on the player data and payout  
25 parameters. The selected video presentation is then transmitted, via slot network interface 30, to the appropriate slot machine 14, 16, 18 for display. Instead of storing the video presentation in network server 12 and

transmitting the video information to slot machine 14, 16, 18, the video information can be stored locally in each slot machine 14, 16, 18 for subsequent display.

5        Figure 2 illustrates a block diagram of a slot machine 14. Slot machine 14 is configured in a manner known in the prior art, except for a display control subroutine 32, a probability database 34 and a payout database 36. Player tracking device 22 includes a display 24, a card reader 26 and buttons 28 ("soft" or "hard") for enabling a player to  
10        input data into slot machine 14. It should be noted that "buttons" can refer to a touchscreen button or a physical button on the outside of the machine casing. A video display area 20 may also be provided in slot machine 14,  
15        but may not be externally accessed by network server 12. If this is the case, display 24 is used to display downloaded video information (e.g., movies, music videos, etc.) and further messages to the player. Each of the remaining submodules within slot machine 14 is known to  
20        those skilled in the art and requires no detailed discussion.

Display control subroutine 32 controls the operation of tracking device 22, including card reader 26 and buttons  
25        28. When a player inputs a selection or other data via buttons 28, such entry is recognized by display control subroutine 32, which causes the resident CPU in slot

machine 14 to configure the entered data for transmission over slot network interface 30 to network server 12.

Network server 12 includes a video processor subroutine 38 which is stored therein or which can be loaded thereinto via a magnetic disk 56 (Figure 3). The video processor subroutine 38, in combination with the network server hardware, provides control and updating of connected databases, and selection and transmission of video presentation material to connected slot machines. The video processor subroutine 38 further processes input signals from the players at the respective slot machines.

Figure 3 illustrates a block diagram of a representative network server 12. Network server 12 includes a central processor unit (CPU) 46 which is coupled to a random access memory (RAM) 48, a read only memory (ROM) 50 and a communication port 52 which provides interconnection to slot machine interface 30. A data storage device 54 provides memory capacity for a video processor subroutine 38, a casino player database 40, a gaming session database 42 and a video database 44.

A schematic illustration of the contents of the casino player database 40 is found in Figure 4 and preferably includes Name; Player Identification (ID) Number; Address; and Preferred Video Categories. Most of the contents of player database 40 are self explanatory and require no

further description. The Preferred Video Categories identifies types of video information, (e.g., sports, adventure, etc.). In essence, player database 40 provides sufficient information to enable network server 12 to  
5 perform the invention hereof without requiring any further data from the player.

Gaming session database 42 is schematically shown in Figure 5 and includes the following data:

- 10 Slot Machine Identification (ID) Number;
- Slot Machine Type;
- Player ID Number;
- Video Category;
- Video Identification (ID) Number;
- 15 Amount of Clip Viewed Already; and
- Output Device.

Most of the contents of session database are self-explanatory and require no further description. Slot Machine Type identifies the make and model of the slot  
20 machine being played. Video ID Number identifies a particular video previously viewed by the player. "Amount of Clip Viewed Already" indicates how much of the video information has been previously viewed by the player. Output Device indicates the type of display device used for  
25 each particular video information source (e.g., display screen, Virtual-Reality glasses, etc.).

Video database 44 is shown in Figure 6 and has fields including Video ID Number, Category, Title and Length(time). Video ID Number identifies a particular video presentation. Category classifies the type of video presentation, (e.g., action, sports, etc.) Title is the title of each video presentation. Finally, Length(Time) indicates the length of time of the entire video presentation.

10 Figure 7 schematically illustrates a payout database 36 and includes Reel Outcome, 1 Coin, 2 Coins and 3 Coins fields. The Reel Outcome field identifies all possible permutations of gaming results for slot machine 14. The 1 Coins through 3 Coins fields correspond to payout  
15 parameters (e.g., predetermined payout) associated with each possible gaming result. That is to say, every possible combination of gaming outcome in the Reel Outcome field is associated with a payout parameter, thereby ensuring that each slot machine play results in payout,  
20 (e.g., at least a presentation of video information.) For instance, a player, inserting three coins and receiving a gaming result of 2 Bells & a Lemon, will receive 45 seconds worth of a video presentation.

25 Before proceeding with a description of the operation of the first embodiment of the invention, it should be understood that in a preferred embodiment each slot machine is configured to provide at least a video payout (e.g., a

video presentation), on each slot machine play, in addition to conventional payouts (e.g., a monetary sum) that are commonly provided by slot machines. Therefore, a player always wins at least a video payout on each play. In  
5 alternate embodiments, the invention includes payouts of video information as the only payout, and/or video payouts supplemental to normal cash payouts but without a win on every play.

10 Turning now to Figures 8 through 11, the operation of the first embodiment of the invention will be described. Initially, each slot machine 14, 16, 18 has had loaded and stored therein probability table 34, payout table 36 and display control subroutine 32. The network server 12 also  
15 has had loaded and stored therein video processor subroutine 38 player database 40, session database 42 and video database 44. Such stored databases enable network server 12 to selectively provide a video presentation to players at each individual slot machines 14, 16, 18.

20

As shown in Figure 8, a player begins a slot machine play session by inserting a player tracking card (not shown) into card reader 26 of slot machine 14 (Box 60). The player tracking card stores at least a Player ID Number  
25 and may also store monetary credit information. Slot machine 14 transmits the Player ID Number to network server 12 over slot network interface 30 (Box 62). Network server 12 receives the Player ID Number, accesses session database

42 (Box 64) and determines whether a session record exists for the Player ID Number (Box 66). If a session record exists, network server 12 retrieves the Video ID Number and Amount of Clip Already Viewed that are associated with the Player ID Number (Box 70). Otherwise, network server 12 generates a new session record in session database 42, for the new Player ID Number (Box 68). Such an arrangement allows a player to resume display of a video presentation at a future play session and, thus, provides additional incentive for a player to resume slot machine play.

While not shown in Figure 8, slot machine 14 may utilize other methods for receiving player data. For instance, a player can manually input a resume code or Player ID Number (as described above), instead of utilizing a player tracking card. The resume code or Player ID Number would be provided to a player upon a termination of a video presentation by the player. A player can then input the resume code or Player ID Number, via buttons 28, at another time or gaming device and resume display of the video presentation from the point of termination. As with the player tracking card embodiment described above, the player provided Player ID Number or resume code is likewise transmitted to network server 12 for processing.

Thereafter, a player can commence slot machine play, as shown in Figures 9 through 11. A player initiates a slot machine play by pulling a handle or pushing a "spin reels" button (Box 72). Slot machine 14 then generates a

random number and assigns a corresponding outcome to the random number (Box 74). The CPU of slot machine 14 accesses payout database 36, locates the particular gaming result under Reel Outcome field and assigns a corresponding payout parameter from either the 1 Coin, 2 Coins or 3 Coins field accordingly (Box 76). The payout parameter is then transmitted to network server 12.

Network server 12 receives the payout parameter and accesses session database 42 (Box 86). Based on the Player ID Number, network server 12 selects a video presentation accordingly. For example, the network server would select video presentation SP2345, a sports video, for Player ID Number 4356-ABC.

15

Network server 12 (Figure 10) then calculates a start point and an end point of video presentation to be transmitted to slot machine 14 based on the payout parameter (e.g., 45 seconds of video presentation) and an amount of video presentation already viewed by the player (Box 88). Other gaming result or player factors may also be considered in calculating the length of video presentation. For example, the length of a play session or player status (e.g., preferred player) could extend the length of the presentation.

Network server 12 then queues the next portion of the video presentation in sequence for transmission (Box 90)



and transmits the video presentation to slot machine 14 (Box 92). After transmission, the Amount Of Clip Viewed field of session database 42 is updated to reflect the additional time period of transmitted video presentation  
5 (Box 94).

Thereafter, slot machine 14 receives the video presentation from network server 12 (Box 96) and the reels stop spinning to display the gaming result to the player  
10 (Box 98). The video presentation is then displayed on display 24 of slot machine 14 (Box 102), and a player can initiate the next slot machine play (Box 100), as the video presentation is displayed. Note that a player continuously playing a slot machine (e.g., initiating one slot machine  
15 play after another) will receive a continuous video stream of video presentation.

In a second embodiment of the present invention, slot machine 14 utilizes the video presentation to provide an  
20 additional puzzle-type game. Each video presentation portion (e.g., video clip) displayed to the player upon a non-monetary payout parameter provides a clue for solving a puzzle. The puzzle may be a murder mystery, trivia game, etc. After each displayed video presentation portion, the  
25 player is instructed over display 24 to solve the puzzle, for example, by selecting one of multiple answer choices which is then compared with a pre-defined answer or player input associated with the displayed video presentation.

Such a gaming feature may be a form of payout in itself or may provide a prize structure of its own.

In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, slot machine 14 provides either a monetary payout or a video payout, for each slot machine play. The payout is based on the gaming result and the corresponding payout parameter from payout database 36. Note that the video payouts are provided for each gaming result that typically provides no monetary payout, (e.g., a losing gaming result or outcome.) For instance, a gaming result corresponding to 3 Bars would result in a monetary payout to the player, whereas 2 Peaches & 1 Bell would result in a video payout to the player.

15

Payout database 36 (Figure 7) is adapted to include monetary payout parameters and video payout parameters. Each possible gaming result or combination in payout database 36 has a corresponding payout parameter, either as a monetary payout parameter (e.g., cash or credit) or a video payout parameter (e.g., video presentation).

Slot machine 14 is adapted to identify an occurrence of a monetary payout parameter as compared to a video payout parameter and to provide a corresponding payout to the player. Referring to Figure 9, such an arrangement is accomplished by incorporating additional steps to the operation of the invention described above, as indicated by

the reference number 77 (Figure 9). Specifically, after a gaming result is generated and a corresponding payout parameter is selected from payout database 26 (Boxes 74, 76), slot machine 14 determines whether the payout parameter is a monetary payout parameter or a video payout parameter (Box 78).

If the payout parameter is monetary, slot machine 14 can issue the monetary payout, either as cash or locally stored machine credits (Box 80). Cash can be directly dispensed to the player or credited to an account maintained locally at the machine or remotely at the server. In any case, after a monetary payout is issued, a player can then initiate the next slot machine play (Box 82).

If the payout parameter is a video payout, slot machine 14 transmits the payout parameter to network server 12 (Box 84). At this point, network server 12 performs the same operations as those described above for the first embodiment (Figures 10 and 11), namely, selecting a segment of video presentation and transmitting it back to slot machine 14 for display.

Although slot machine 14, in this case, provides either a video payout or a monetary payout, other payouts or combination of payouts may also be provided. Such payouts may include a free play, frequent flyer miles, etc.

Payout database 36, likewise, would be adapted to include additional payout parameters; and gaming system 10 would be configured to provide these additional forms of payment. For example, frequent flyer miles could be provided in the same manner as monetary credits. In each case, however, the payout, its type and amount is derived from the payout database, (e.g., a payout table), and may also be dependent upon the Player ID Number.

10 In summary, the present invention provides a gaming system wherein a player always wins a prize, in the form of selected video presentation (e.g., a movie, music video, etc.), for each play of a gaming device. The prize structure is based on the gaming result or outcome  
15 generated during the play. Such a gaming system may also provide other prizes such as a monetary sum, frequent flyer miles, a free pull, etc.

It should be understood that the forgoing description  
20 is only illustrative of the invention. Various alternatives and modifications can be devised by those skilled in the art without departing from the invention. Accordingly, the present invention is intended to embrace all such alternatives, modifications and variances which  
25 fall within the scope of the appended claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of operating a gaming device which provides,  
at least, a video payout, said video payout based on a set  
5 of payouts and being a presentation of video information  
displayed to a player, said gaming device including memory  
means for storing payouts corresponding to gaming  
results, said method comprising the steps of:  
initiating a play of said gaming device in response to  
10 a user input;  
generating a gaming result in response to said play;  
and  
selecting a payout corresponding to said gaming  
result; and  
15 providing video information to said player based on  
said payout.
2. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of  
providing video information further comprises accessing  
20 said video information from an external source.
3. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of  
providing video information, in accordance with player  
data, further causes a selected subset of video information  
25 to be displayed to said player.

4. A method as recited in claim 3, wherein said player data is derived from a player-inserted identity card with player data.

5 5. A method as recited in claim 3, wherein said player data is derived from a player input, said player input corresponding to data provided to said player upon a termination of video information during a previous play session.

10

6. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said video information offers an award to said player in return for a player input corresponding to a predetermined response to said video information, said gaming device further comprising input means for receiving player inputs, said method comprising the further steps of:

receiving a player input corresponding to said predetermined response; and

responding to said player input by issuing an award to  
20 said player.

7. A method of playing a gaming device which provides, at least, a video payout including a presentation of video information, said method comprising the steps:

25 initiating a play;

receiving a gaming result in response to said play;

and

receiving a video payout, as a presentation of video information, in accordance with each said gaming result.

8. A method as recited in claim 7, wherein said video information offers an award in return for a player input corresponding to a predetermined response to said video information, said gaming device further including input means for receiving responses from said player, said method comprising the further steps:

10 providing a player input in response to a displayed query; and

in response to said player input which matches a predetermined response, receiving an award.

15 9. A gaming machine of the type wherein a paid play generates an outcome determined at least in part by a set of payout conditions, said gaming machine comprising:

a first set of payout conditions defining a first set of outcomes that result in a monetary payout; and

20 a second set of payout conditions defining a second set of outcomes that result in a display of video information.

10. The gaming machine of claim 9 wherein said display of  
25 video information includes a partial clip of a sequence of video information.

11. A method of playing a gaming machine of the type wherein a play generates an outcome determined at least in part by a set of payout conditions, said method comprising the steps of:

- 5       initiating a play of said gaming machine;  
          receiving in response to a first set of outcomes monetary rewards; and  
          receiving in response to a second set of outcomes partial, sequential clips of video entertainment.

10

12. A method in accordance with claim 11 wherein said video entertainment comprises a movie.

13. A computer server for controlling a plurality of  
15 gaming machines, each of said plurality of gaming machines of the type wherein a play generates an outcome determined at least in part by a set of payout conditions, said computer server comprising:

- electronic memory; and  
20       a processor connected to said electronic memory;  
          said electronic memory containing entertainment-oriented video information, player identifiers, and a history of video clips displayed to player identifiers;  
          said processor operative with instructions from said  
25 electronic memory to  
          receive from a gaming machine an outcome,  
          receive from said gaming machine a player identifier,



select, responsive to said outcome and said player  
identifier, a sequential clip from said video information,  
and  
initiate the transmission of said sequential clip of  
s video information to said gaming machine.

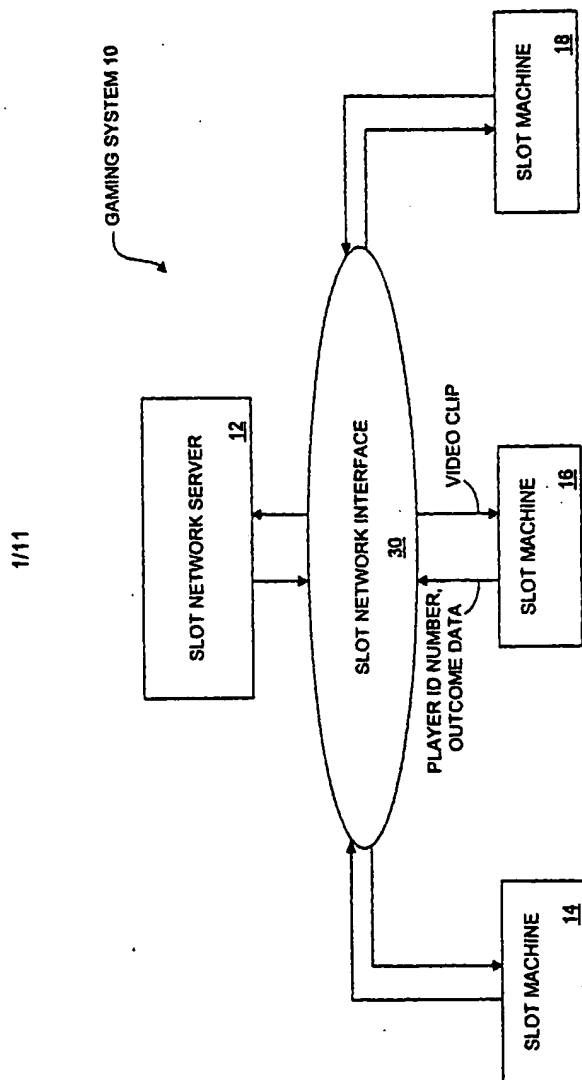


FIG. 1

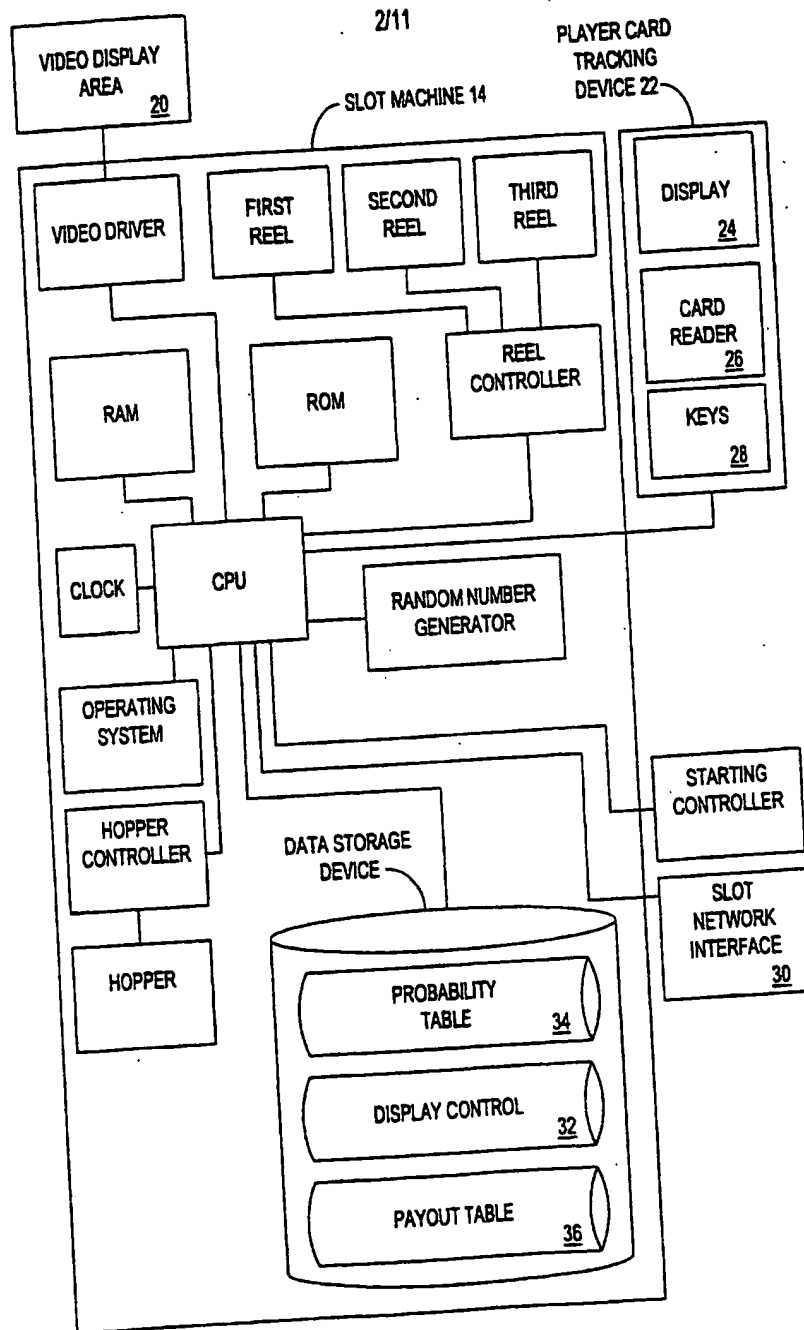


FIG. 2

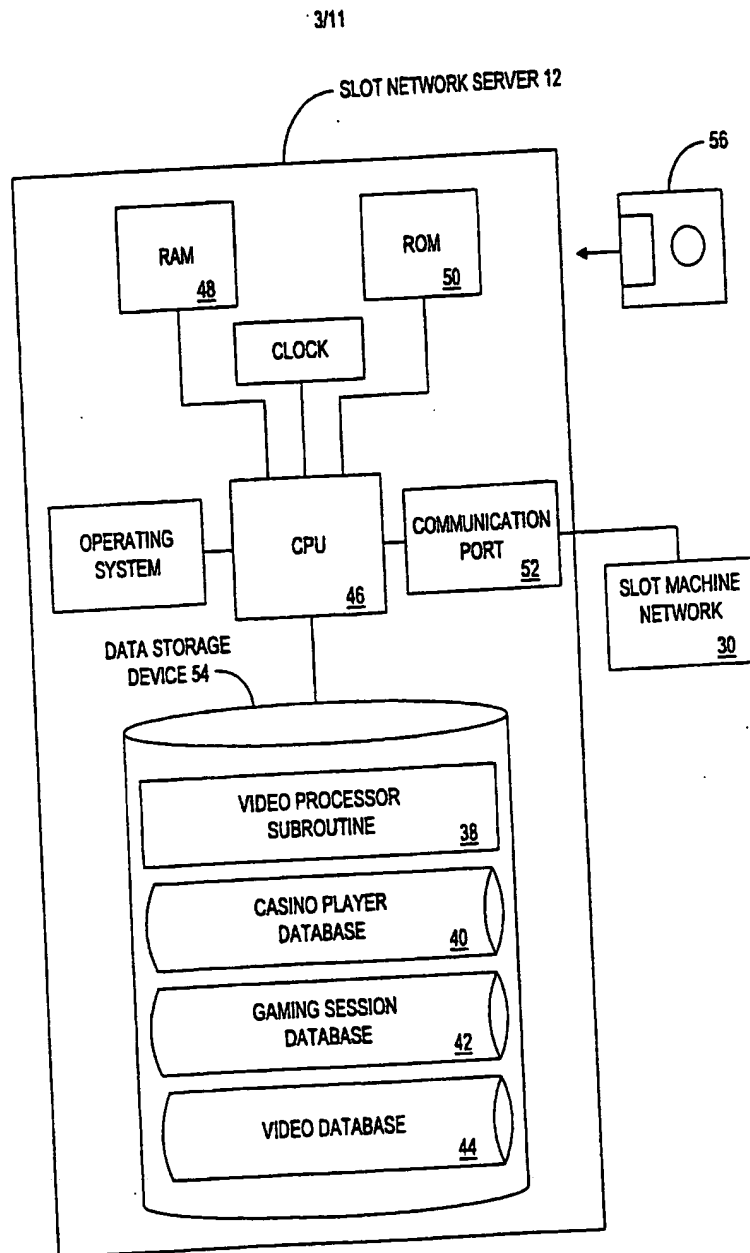


FIG. 3

CASINO PLAYER DATABASE 40

NAME	PLAYER ID NUMBER	ADDRESS	PREFERRED VIDEO CATEGORIES
BOB SMITH	4356-ABC	124 MAIN ST. ANYTOWN	COMEDY
DOUG JONES	1234-FVT	345 MAIN ST. SOMETOWN	SPORTS

FIG. 4

GAMING SESSION DATABASE 42



SLOT MACHINE ID NUMBER	SLOT MACHINE TYPE	PLAYER ID NUMBER	VIDEO CATEGORY	VIDEO ID NUMBER	AMOUNT OF CLIP VIEWED ALREADY	OUTPUT DEVICE
RIXSCPU	BALLY 2A	4356-ABC	SPORTS	SP2345	2 MINS. 48 SECONDS	VIDEO SCREEN
50BGCRP	IGT 45DE	1234-FVT	ADVENTURE	AD5843	31 SECONDS	VR GOGGLES

FIG. 5

VIDEO DATABASE 44

VIDEO ID NUMBER	CATAGORY	TITLE	LENGTH (TIME)
SP2345	SPORTS	1988 BASEBALL HIGHLIGHTS	20 MINUTES
AD5643	ADVENTURE	AMAZON JOURNEY	15 MINUTES

FIG. 6

SLOT MACHINE PAYOUT TABLE 38

REEL OUTCOME	1 COIN	2 COINS	3 COINS
BAR/BAR/BAR	50	100	150
CHERRY/CHERRY/CHERRY	25	50	75
LEMON/LEMON/LEMON	15	30	45
BELL/BELL/BELL	10	20	30
BAR/BAR/CHERRY	5	10	15
CHERRY/CHERRY/BAR	1	2	3
BELL/BELL/LEMON	30 SEC. VIDEO	60 SEC. VIDEO	90 SEC. VIDEO
PEACH/PEACH/BELL	15 SEC. VIDEO	30 SEC. VIDEO	45 SEC. VIDEO
ALL OTHERS (LOSING COMBINATIONS)	10 SEC. VIDEO	20 SEC. VIDEO	30 SEC. VIDEO

FIG. 7



8/11

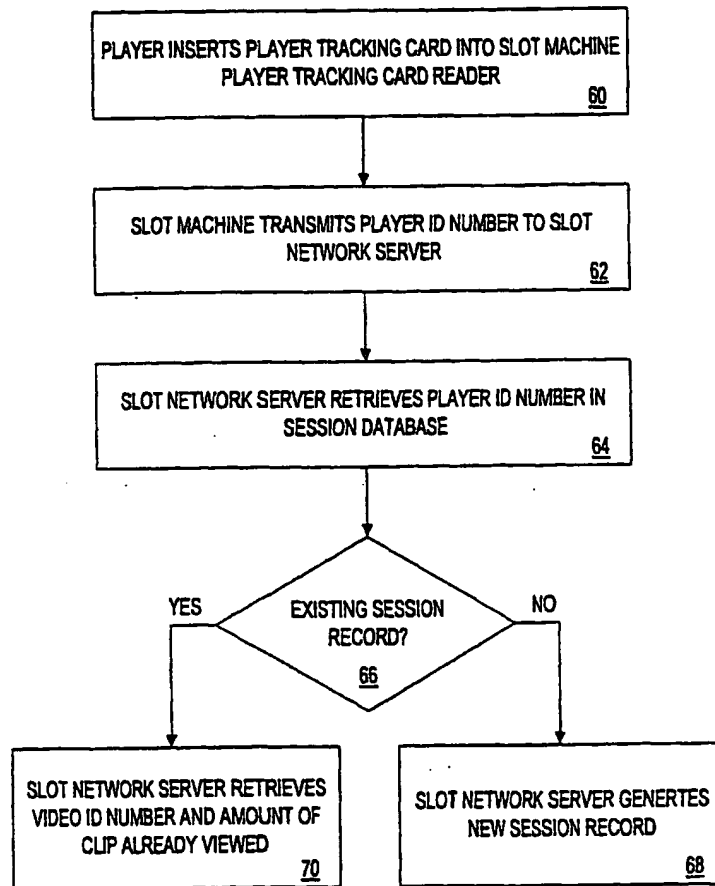


FIG. 8

9/11

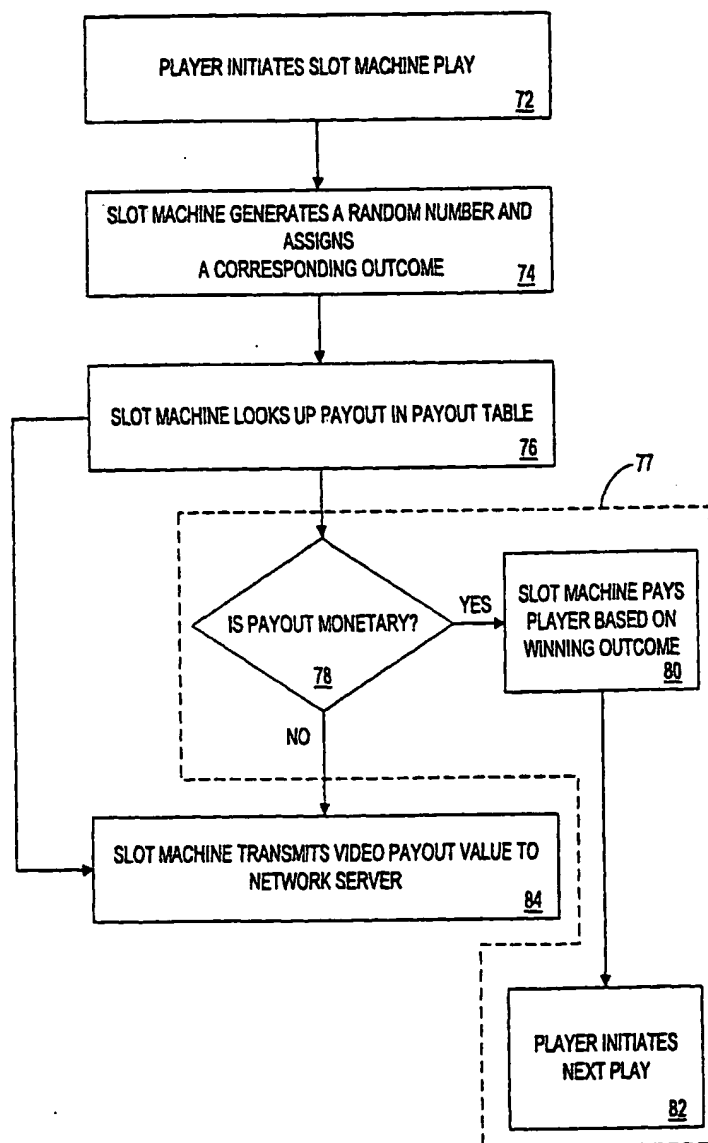


FIG. 9

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10/11

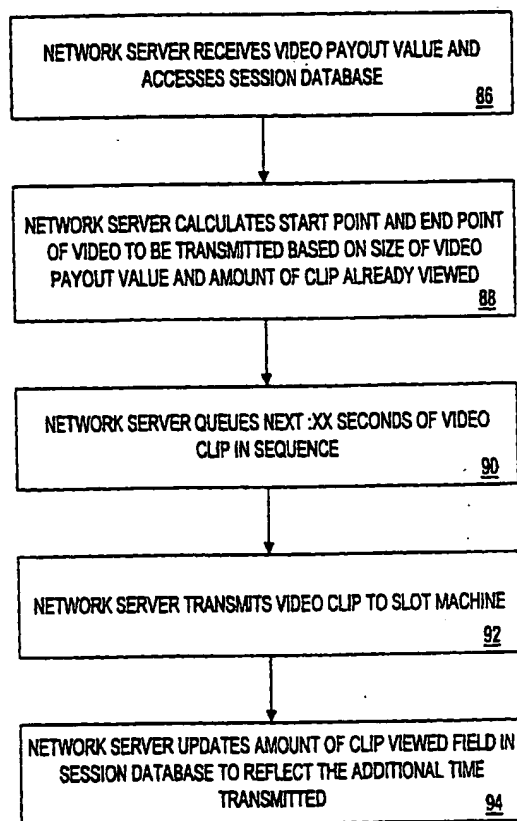


FIG. 10

11/11

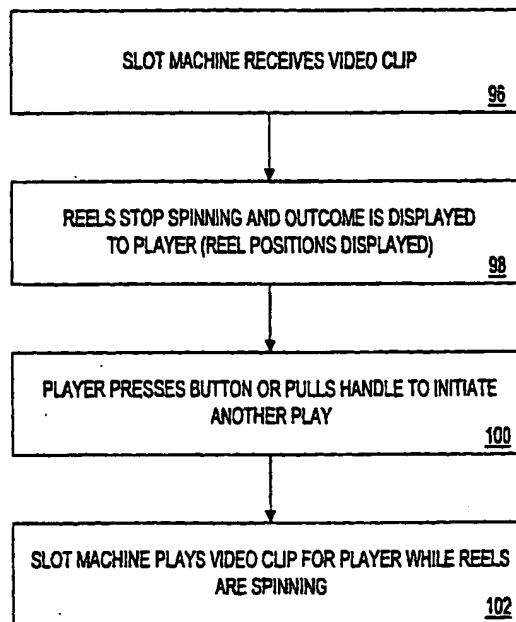


FIG. 11

# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.  
PCT/US98/06474

## A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(6) : G07F 17/34  
US CL : 463/20

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

## B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 463/20, 19, 13, 12, 25; 273/143R, 138.2

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 5,449,173 A (THOMAS et al.) 12 September 1995, whole document	1-13
Y	US 5,127,651 A (OKADA) 07 July 1992, whole document	1-13

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☐ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:	* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
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* B* earlier document published on or after the international filing date	* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combinations being obvious to a person skilled in the art
* L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	* A* document member of the same patent family
* O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	
* P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search

05 MAY 1998

Date of mailing of the international search report

20 MAY 1998

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US  
Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks  
Box PCT  
Washington, D.C. 20231  
Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230

Authorized officer

MICHAEL O'NEILL

Telephone No. (703) 308-1148

*Shella Vanev*  
**Patent Specialist**  
Group 3200 3700

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